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NATO Is Told Soviet in Disarray Poses a Bigger Peril

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BRUSSELS, May 12—Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger told the Defense Planning Committee of the Atlantic alliance today that internal failures in the Soviet Union might lead it into military adventurism.

American defense officials who declined to be identified quoted Mr. Weinberger as having said:

"The current and prospective leaders of the Soviet Union may be impelled by lack of success in other fields to turn in-

stead to the one field where they have both confidence and capability, stark military power and military threats."

The statement seemed to echo a view expressed last weekend by Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. at Syracuse University graduation exercises. Mr. Haig spoke of Soviet internal weaknesses and suggested that a major military power like the Soviet Union posed more of a threat if faced with domestic problems.

An American intelligence briefing on Soviet conventional forces was said to have made a deep impact on the Defense

Planning Committee, which is made up of alliance defense ministers except those of France and Iceland. France withdrew from military aspects of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1966 and Iceland has no military forces.

A censored version of the briefing made public earlier today said Soviet defense spending, which grew at a rate of 4 percent in the 1970's, would continue to grow at that rate "at least up to 1985."

Mr. Weinberger told the committee that Western efforts to establish détente with the Soviet Union had not led to any decrease in Soviet military efforts.

According to the Weinberger statement, Soviet ground forces in Central Europe are supported by a fighter force that has been expanded by the delivery of a thousand new planes in each of the last eight years. The Soviet Navy was said to have eight new classes of submarines and four new classes of surface combatants, including aircraft carriers and cruisers.

The American qualitative lead in weapons, Mr. Weinberger said, has been overtaken by the Soviet forces in tanks, armored fighting vehicles and missiles.

A report from NATO's Military Committee, which is made up of the allies' chiefs of staff, said the restructuring of the Soviet Army made it evident that the alliance faced the threat of a high number of brigade-size units "capable of independent and rapid operations." Military sources put the war strength of the brigades at about 3,000 men.

Adm. Robert H. Falls of Canada, chairman of the Military Committee, noted at a news conference that, while the Soviet high command was changing the shape and size of some units to provide greater fire power, the total of combat-ready divisions was increasing. He ascribed this to the shipment of new arms to divisions that are usually manned at a third of war strength.

The Military Committee report, reviewing Soviet weapons developments, noted the deployment of SS-20 ballistic missiles, which have a range that covers Europe from Scotland to Gibraltar. The report said the SS-20's had been "deployed faster than the older SS-4 and SS-5 have been phased out."

NATO's military leaders agreed that the alliance should not become involved in Southwest Asia through a multinational force, but that individual governments should conclude agreements with the United States to provide assistance, Admiral Falls said.

He said the United States was investigating practical problems such as rights of passage by sea and through other countries' airspace to speed the movement of forces to the Persian Gulf.